1-4-1.xml  
  
‘The zinc's the thing, says Hamlet  
He pishes in the pail, zips up.  
Zits at the shaving mirror  
Slings the pailful at the prompter  
Sets the upturned bucket on the boards  
And sits enthroned,  
For a moment looking remarkably like Claudius.

1-5-1.xml  
  
Open wide  
Say Ah  
Newborn  
Dangled by the ankles  
The vowel unrolls its bundle:  
Nothing there.  
An old boy nailed to the floorboards  
By the noise coming out his throat. His eyes  
Shedding all the light they'd taken in.

1-5-2.xml  
  
**Mission Control**Amice, alb and girdle, stole and chasuble  
The priest got togged up like an astronaut  
To blast off in a cloud of incense  
Orbit the altar two-and-a-half times  
Do some moonwalk maintenance on the tabernacle nose-cone  
Then back to the chapel house  
For Sunday lunch.

2-1-1.xml  
  
Dark of brow and bright of blue  
Deep of bow. A wolfish brew  
Creaky bough and dark it blew

2-2-1.xml  
  
**Animal Rights: The Musical**Horse-hair bow. To string a fiddle  
Skin a cat. Another song,  
Another songbird.  
Blow the bone whistle, bro,  
Tighten that drum.

2-3-2.xml  
  
Two bob or was it five for a single  
In its paper poke. Blob of vinyl  
With a spiral scratch on it.

3-1-1.xml  
  
My blessing on your frosty pow  
Your salty prow, the  
Stricken plough. Take a pew  
In the snug beside me.  
We'll sink a few.

3-2-1.xml  
  
How they burned  
You never saw you never dreamt  
You never got. Pro  
Career on track  
The sleepers  
How they burned.  
How the buried signals  
Cracked and burgeoned.

3-2-2.xml  
  
This blunt, late-Latin silver probe  
Doesn't draw but follows  
Or at most defines the border  
Of the wound to swab and dress.  
Macerated bandages, rag paper  
Tears like skin the pencil bruises. What  
Else can you do? You see her face  
You say her name.

4-1-1.xml  
  
This cat doesn't mew, it produces a repugnant  
Nasal moo - huong! Huong!  
If any of you knows of someone  
Who answered to that name when he could,  
Who maybe died in a tunnel in the American war,  
Would you please have him put to rest, with all respect?

4-2-1.xml  
  
Used to mow the grass at Rosshall Park with those  
500cc diesel mowers. Heavy engines.  
Hid one once by tying a rope to the handlebars  
And hoisting it up a tree.

4-3-2.xml  
  
Ah, the mob!  
You can grab it by the gonads  
And shake it till it purrs. The voice  
Of greed, a public thing,  
Your demagocracy.

5-1-1.xml  
  
**Bellagio**Before you look  
Before you can even see  
It turns out  
A vow was made for you.  
He clicks file to view  
She clicks agree and there you are.  
You know they'd not have done that  
Or you think I know my rights,  
Let's renegotiate. But they start  
To drop around you  
And you know, this view:  
It really is to die for.

5-2-1.xml  
  
We stopped in Mid Yell  
Between Sullom Voe  
And a raised beach by the  
Whalsay pitch & putt.  
('He's J.-Arthur-Ranked it  
Into the rough!')  
No trees but in the fossil swamp,  
Every line on each leaf  
Rendered.

5-7-2.xml  
  
Breathe in: bref,  
Breathe out: verb  
In the bin the bin the be-  
ginning, in the beginning, pump-  
ing away like a burst pipe.

6-1-1.xml  
  
'I would no more deprive a nobleman  
of his respect than of his money' (Dr Johnson)  
My parents paid feu duty.  
The flue was coughed with soot.  
The laird flew in BOAC to sort it.  
One of the few who cared.

6-2-1.xml  
  
To and fro, the plantigrade  
On that frisbee floe,  
No mate to track  
No foe to thwack.  
All ebb, no flow,  
It's time to swim in those  
Pantoum pyjamas.

6-3-2.xml  
  
Campbell fancies Marshall something  
Rotten. She laughs herself. Forgets to click  
The seatbelt when he calls to fob off dinner.  
The geomantic junta sees him as young and dangerous,  
Bless 'em. She doesn't see the police car till she  
Stops on a green light, then wonders (him  
Singing the praises of his wife and son)  
What this will cost her.

7-1-1.xml  
  
Blessed art thou  
Under the Roman radar  
Unlike that son of yours, who'd thew  
The doctors of the law  
And throw his negative weight around  
Till he was through with the system.  
There are words for those who've lost a spouse or parent,  
But not for the likes of you.

7-2-1.xml  
  
**Undersecretary**The demagocratic  
Tough at the top  
And his gag of advisors  
Inclined to lick butt.  
Call it nauseabondage  
Though wait a sec:  
What I hold down is still more  
Than I want to throw up.

7-3-2.xml  
  
**Throb (au Tombeau des Rois)**Arms flung too wide for an embrace  
A jess of silk around your wrist  
The glow from that hooded heart  
Leaks through your fingers  
As, sixth in line, embalmed and blind,  
I search the cage.

8-1-1.xml  
  
Tell me, now, what's new in the world?  
Biology: specific death for general entropy.  
I mean was there light till somebody saw it  
Saw it new (as it never was)?

8-2-1.xml  
  
Ahm no  
Rite nthi heid,  
Um no.  
A umny, so I'm noh ?  
The epignostic  
Wave o this  
Great language  
Lifts me out my shoes.  
Wisest of tongues  
You know-nothing system  
'll not take a telling.  
Geez a wee tune.

8-3-2.xml  
  
**Rescue One**Correct the fig tree's fumbled catch  
Of collapsing Khmer temples  
  
Repack the gut, unsplinter shin  
Knob of bone, flap of skin in the landmine jungle  
  
And send the firemen dancing down the stair before  
The tower rises out of its own cloud  
Apollo nine.

9-1-1.xml  
  
Too true that it takes two to tango;  
Three, in fact.

9-2-1.xml  
  
Toe to toe with him  
She's grasped her wrist behind his neck  
And slid her elbows  
Up to his shoulders.  
The tow-rope tightens  
A surge of gratitude.  
He's gone with her.

9-4-2.xml  
  
**Apocalypse Then**A tub four in the nineteen-  
Seventies rowing upriver from  
Glasgow Green. You'd love  
The smell of napalm in the morning.

10-1-1.xml  
  
Do this do that  
I drew the line at  
Doocots. Doocots!  
Pitting them in crenellated  
Corrugated iron Yoker doocots by the Clyde  
Or mibbe beehive doocots in Corstorphine

10-2-1.xml  
  
This is the sour-dough, the dowry,  
To liven adobe or leaven your thoughts -  
The gardener's hand, a doe in the deer park.

10-3-2.xml  
  
Daub  
Wattle and daub  
Daub the cheekbones.  
Dance.

11-1-1.xml  
  
A zoo  
's a zoom  
ysee, mzee,  
The varmints nest in the arc of the lens  
So close up you can smell 'em  
Their vertebrae and vellum.  
When's  
Feeding time? Who's she?  
A sow in a skiff  
A pig in a scow  
Who'll wallow in offal  
And stow like a sofa.  
The slough in the trough'll  
Be scuttling bilge  
And is that where she's  
Rooting for truffle?  
The keepers strew  
What butchers slew  
A huntress could spew the dead meat,  
Clip a screw, but the skew of the bars  
Stops her swipe. And you can't  
Sue for war.

11-2-1.xml  
  
You are so  
Slow  
That though my toes are sprouting  
Totty roots in cellars of my sleep  
I still have time to clip them  
(only one needs disinfected) and outrun you.  
I could sew a lifer's worth of gunny sacks  
As you fumble for the complement to that verb you uttered earlier,  
Stow your every breath in subtle verses  
And, as you turn towards me and away,  
Watch the Arctic ice and snow disperse and recongeal.

11-3-2.xml  
  
**Sniff. Choke. Sob.**You slob! You swab! Ignoble  
Son of a bitch!

12-1-1.xml  
  
Give them their due: they were crass  
But they'd chew up and spit out their foe by the gross  
And keep order: a Jew to the lions, a Gaul to the cross.  
Asleep on their watch, what tin tortoise-shells  
Tin and lead: bronze, body armour. Dew on the grass.

12-2-1.xml  
  
John Anderson my jo  
To meet the rising blow

12-3-2.xml  
  
**Also Ran**While engrossed in the crossword  
(The job was that thrilling)  
I chalked off a horse  
That ran and won: Mandilinee.  
How did you manage to do a stupid  
Thing like that? said the regional manager.  
(I think he'd on a grey raincoat). Oh,  
I'd been practising all week.

13-1-1.xml  
  
My own little stew in her silks.  
What a pleasure it was to stalk  
That merciless shrew. The pump that she dangled  
The panama shoe by one toe or two. That was me  
And then you.

13-2-1.xml  
  
In the 50s, early 20s, Aunty Margaret  
Motoring in the Borders. Funny smell.  
Opens the bonnet and the manual.  
Nothing obvious, old bit of rubber,  
Puts it in the glove box.  
Car won't start. She freewheels  
Down the hill, and there's a garage.  
Mechanic looks. She asks him what's up.  
It's your fan belt.  
 Yes?  
You huvnae got wan.  
 Oh!  
(She goes to show him) Is that it?  
Aye,  
But it's no whaur it's usually kept.

13-4-2.xml  
  
A cranberry shrub, as in sherbet, to syrup  
Or powder the pill. Ach what rubbish!  
What dandruff and scurf! Brush it off  
Of your licorice lapel.  
Scrubadub.

14-1-1.xml  
  
Disfigured in a row with her ex:  
Glass eye, glass stopper.  
No punishment too harsh to rue -  
Eyes and bollocks swapped, by  
Dante's surgeon-general. The god  
Of noma that eats a face more slowly  
Stop. Cruelty's intentional.  
So is beauty.

14-2-1.xml  
  
**That Old Art of Memory**Row on row I reconstruct  
This table out of memory,  
The courses - cod roe, roebuck roast - the cronies  
And columns that, however strong,  
Can't keep the roof from coming down.

14-2-2.xml  
  
**Vermeer**A robe so stiff it overrules,  
So blue it yet displays  
As though you were wrapped in scent  
Or music.

15-1-1.xml  
  
This yew tree coughs his sulfur dust  
From Fortingall to the Caucasus  
Where wolves will find an old sheep, knelt  
On her scree of years. So what.  
You, as it turns out, were all  
That ever meant or mattered.

15-2-9.xml  
  
Linked in  
Yoked up  
Sold on.

15-3-10.xml  
  
**Yod**What yawled in the wiring  
Yawned. A lull. The boat  
Yawed for a beat.

16-1-1.xml  
  
Goo  
It's the mushroom's lunchtime  
Flies are stuck in the grue-  
Some sweat white spots on a red um-  
Brella that just glue and grew.

16-2-1.xml  
  
Go. And don't tell me  
I wouldn't let you  
Grow. You'll see your fingers tingle  
And glow as you stretch  
Your palms towards me. No.

16-2-2.xml  
  
**"Buenos Aires: Ex-dictator on child-abduction charges"**Three drops of rain on my back  
As I was throwing out the children's cot  
The playpen and the bags of clothes.  
"Zero to six" it said, meaning months:  
Years back then were unthinkable.  
  
Three drops of rain on my back  
From the storm on a campsite over the mountain  
Connections we make, quick as thinking - Now  
Twenty years after abduction at birth  
Of babies from blindfolded prisoners  
  
Three drops of rain on my back. I was tortured  
With my little failure to love  
While people like me were being dumped in the Atlantic  
In case they upset the account I'm paid from -  
This globe. Good old Henry Kissinger.

17-1-1.xml  
  
**Radio Caroline**The crew I can imagine: fresh and hopeful  
As the queue of singles waiting to be spun.  
But as to how a record deck could work on the North Sea swell  
I have no clue. Did they have  
A billiard table too, in the mess? the balls adrift  
Like spirit-level bubbles, space invaders,  
The cue - a lumbering, predigital cursor?  
And a cow called Caroline on deck  
To grow grass in the cowpats.

17-2-1.xml  
  
**With a Line from Pasternak**Bell the breeze, crows,  
Peel off the trees like burning paper.  
Build your rafts on the highest branches your beaks can't snap;  
Sit there and crow.

17-3-2.xml  
  
**Cob**A dusty red and rusty  
Dead 1930s Norton  
In the cellar  
By the wine butt  
Next to me.  
  
A motor pump to draw ad lib  
On an old artesian well.  
  
A Bluebottle throttles down on cobweb roads.  
  
Kob was the one I picked on  
When the others picked on me.  
He was timid; I was the pariah  
Collaborator clobbered in the pecking order  
Egged on by a chicken-necked solicitor.  
  
I didn't have much physical skill or  
The toughness to match my temper  
(Which I still have trouble mastering).  
It's still a football match  
With neither goal nor referee.

18-1-1.xml  
  
Who was it? And how?  
- Three wee kings:  
Said they're made of tar;  
A messenger called Hugh  
With a flat-top guitar;  
Hew Wood and Drew Water,  
Looking lost as their sheep.  
Huddle up to the kye, it's cauld!  
Poor baby: lips trembling blue,  
The hue of her cry.

18-2-1.xml  
  
**Eclogue**Hoe  
Yourself  
I'm hot enough  
Trying  
To dig up  
Words in this weather

18-3-2.xml  
  
A kettle was cursing on the hob  
My brother was removing shin bark  
From the hobnails on his football boots  
In case the opposing centre-half  
Demanded forensic tests.  
Scrimshaw! he snapped. Boondoggle!  
I was wrapped up in my hobby -  
Another replica from  
The Clyde Model Dockyard -  
Look who's talking, I said,  
And regretted it instantly.

19-1-1.xml  
  
Since you return to her, as happy as  
Roebuck to a pond in the summer heat,  
You have to woo her.  
Now every synapse swings you down  
That unexpected road to Rome,  
She must respond.  
From any state of play it's mate  
In two moves now, unless  
You speak to her!

19-2-1.xml  
  
The sycophant has a brown nose, pushed out  
By the strain of his cheeks in smiling,  
And a wee moustache to wipe and scratch.

19-5-2.xml  
  
Though the claith were bad  
Blithely may we never  
Gin we get a wab  
It maks little differ.

20-1-1.xml  
  
A crackling lowe  
In the lee of the law,  
Loo-loo- look! No, no:  
A law is a hill,  
A bank is a river bank  
Here, as night and winter lie  
In lieu of the lee-lang day,  
Where he would lay the true in truth  
With a low re mi fa so ti do.

20-2-1.xml  
  
Otherwise there would be no justice.  
The authorities had checked:  
Neither appeal nor provocation worked.  
Mould on a low rock.  
What you got was silence or its beauty.

20-2-2.xml  
  
A lobe  
Said Adam  
Isn't quite a globe  
So those things  
Madam  
I wouldn't call them  
Peaches.

1-1-1.xml

1-2-1.xml  
  
I am what I owe  
And that would be attention  
For example  
To the dead,  
My dear departed.  
What moves me most, these days,  
In the little blackbird,  
Is the way it listens  
What it hears  
That it just has to sing.

1-7-2.xml  
  
Ember packed in the whispered ash  
Ebb of fire in its stone hearth  
The only smoke from an old larch hut  
Its neighbours drowned in lilac.

2-1-2.xml  
  
You boob you bouncy planet, mother dune  
With all due respect it does take two.

2-2-7.xml  
  
Both of us, dear reader, are  
Or once were mortal.  
This is not.

2-2-8.xml  
  
One aborts or rapes and stones its women  
A second flogs and hangs them for converting to a third  
Whose holy nuns so loathe the lovechild that  
Eight hundred little corpses are dumped in a septic tank.  
The word and the bourn and the blackbird's song.  
Exonerated - the burden being love -   
Borne out on a burning updraught  
Could it all be redeemed? Could time  
Skin, brain and bone the cussed structures?  
The word and the bourn and the blackbird's song.  
An interdict: the drum unstruck  
The fossil flute not blown, no bound or sentence.  
Birdsong and silence.

3-1-3.xml  
  
Potus squats the poop deck  
Does furters for his crew  
Abandon ship.

3-2-3.xml  
  
**Billy Connolly XXIII**- What does the Pope drink?  
- Crème de Menthe.  
- Two pints o that then.  
Next day, late: - So that's  
Why they carry him roun  
On that wee chair.

3-2-4.xml  
  
If Fayyum came from  
The Coptic word for sea  
Poem is where cipher met  
The God of the alphabet.

4-1-5.xml  
  
**Gerard Street**She is glazing duck in a noisy restaurant  
When a poem learned in childhood sheds her tears in the sink.  
She remembers it with one word wrong.  
The poet, by the time he wrote it,  
Hadn't been moved by that or anything else in twenty years.

4-2-3.xml  
  
The head of the blooming peony  
Too heavy for its own  
Beauty, is all of a mope.

4-4-4.xml  
  
**Occupation**A sudden, probing silence  
From the table next to ours  
Echoes along Argyll Street.  
Cat got your tongue, gents?  
Get back to base. Yes,  
Before you acquired that Powell drawl  
And a taste for local seafood  
Our mum made soup and scones  
For the Faslane Peace Camp.  
We'll see the back of youse yet.

5-1-9.xml  
  
I'll swing for youse! An idiom from  
Before the hangman got his jotters. Or  
I'll lay about me! – that's  
With a shilelagh, one presumes. So help me! Which  
He never did, or we'd have vouched for it.

5-2-9.xml  
  
The prisoners can't and the trailer trash won't  
Vote in the best democracy bucks can buy  
Where the fifth that think they are  
And the fifth that think they'll soon be  
In the richest one per cent want cuts in tax  
That somebody has to fund. Guess who?

5-3-10.xml  
  
You can void a thing of anything but itself.

6-1-4.xml  
  
A singular fume as superheated  
Coolant gouges at  
The bed of a concrete flume.

6-2-4.xml  
  
**Analog Consumption**We're lined up on the Dunlopillo foam  
Mattress quaffing 'Ola Foam  
The fourteen-pound enamelled iron shell  
Of the projector splinters memory:  
Air and water and light beaten stiff  
Instead of featherdown, milk and thinking back.  
Dad bought it. The motor caught  
And celluloid bubbled up bacillus  
On a sputum smear.

6-2-5.xml  
  
Fauve is feminine  
Foreign and wild  
Shy of this tongue,  
Farouche.

7-1-10.xml  
  
Ill-thewed as the chicken he chewed on, ill-  
Advised or just plain sick, but a better  
Man than the healthy  
Doctor that despised him.

7-2-5.xml  
  
They throve on thieving  
Thrive on theft  
You work for them  
Or vote for them.

7-9-6.xml  
  
**Thief**The best things in life  
Are stolen

8-1-8.xml  
  
**Saussure**There's nothing to it: twelve noon  
Slipped from 'nine' as did 'November'.  
The noun can own no  
Stuff and therefore owe none.  
It's a given, a token.

8-2-3.xml  
  
Can I come in?  
Nope.

8-2-4.xml  
  
**Paracelsus**Pygmy, gnome - the name was immaterial  
To bubbles of the earth they navigated,  
Melancholic getters of gold and silver. Listen  
To how they cough and what they tell you,  
Miners, smelters. Thousands of years they died their evil death;  
What doctor or philosopher among you, till him,  
Knew where your coin was from or sounded airways  
Plated with metal smoke?

9-1-3.xml  
  
Troop doon to the canteen  
Tin mugs and creaking stair  
Troop doun the dim lit back stair  
To the institutional cookers cooling down.

9-2-3.xml  
  
The mole, the velveret  
Wren, the milander  
Shark - earth, air and water -  
Feel your way from  
Tope to trope and the morphic  
Salamander.

9-2-4.xml  
  
Another slim tome from Tom Slime -  
More news from nowhere.

10-1-3.xml  
  
**Aplomb**A drupe, a plum,  
A paternoster branching  
In the slow air of the garden.

10-2-3.xml  
  
Dope I never needed, being  
From the outset more than a bit  
Spaced out.

10-2-4.xml  
  
In the dome you're focusing  
(The Dome of the Rock, a satellite,  
The Pantheon or St Sophia)  
Heaven and head and heavy earth  
That turns beneath your feet for now.

11-1-3.xml  
  
Mind reflected in a scoop of sludge,  
Bony sloop hove to in primal soup,  
It never got far. Scavengers swoop down,  
The raptors stoop (that's what they do I think)  
Governments snoop, where  
Nothing's to find out.

11-2-3.xml  
  
Pious hopes of poets  
Carved in glyphs on bars of  
Soap the polis issues every  
Month or two, the doppler pulse, as we  
Whizz down the slope, backs up  
Its spoke to the hub,  
The indecent keek-hole, the panopticon.  
You poke at the gourmet grub, you  
Cope with government hocus-pocus. A scope,  
In all of this, is not a purpose.

11-3-4.xml  
  
At next to worst it's as when, after a liquid lunch  
Prolonged in hope the rainstorm might relent,  
And having forgotton how to reduce the volume on your headphones  
While trying to sing a completely different song to your companion,  
You happen into a swarm of angry bees that's been blown off course.

12-1-2.xml  
  
Her man is a useless tube who's left the moral  
Realm for the clinical, who delegates  
Decision to professionals, to snore  
In the hammock of the social services.  
They mean well.

12-2-5.xml  
  
By Jove!  
A tautological preposition  
If you think on it.

12-4-6.xml  
  
**Chough**The chough has given up my job  
To live on the indifferent wealth of climbers:  
Here chuff! Here chuff chuff!  
The electric, eponymous chough corrects them :  
Chough.  
The inky chough.  
A scatter of choughs on paper-grey sérac.

13-1-4.xml  
  
Since the Chin Dynasty there existed an official organ called Yueh Fu,  
"Music Bureau", which collected ballad songs from different provinces  
And through which reactions to the government could be detected.  
The apogee of the collection was a one-note suite for tea chest bass  
By a remote ancestor of Li Po, entitled "Change Leadership". It went  
SHTUMM

13-2-5.xml  
  
Who shrove and shrank  
The holy wean molesters?  
Who hid them from the law?

13-3-6.xml  
  
Who can you trust?  
How do you shroff  
A heavy metal  
When nothing’s clean?

14-1-3.xml  
  
Humpty Dumpty sat on his dowp.  
Somebody mooted a Dumpetty roup.  
Owre the dyke did Humpetty loup  
Into the - municipal cowp.

14-2-3.xml  
  
They showed me the noose  
I thought it a stirrup  
And shinned up the rope  
Rough, reassuring,  
The one thing I did well at sports  
To sit on the gibbet.

14-2-4.xml  
  
In my mind I roam  
But in your time I travel  
When you read  
This - your shadow.

15-1-5.xml  
  
You've heard or you'll have  
Heard tell, or at least  
You're aware that something's up.

15-2-12.xml  
  
A yokel yokes his chickens to the whisk.  
Can't leave them idle, right? It's just the job  
For fluffy scrambled eggs or a meringue.

16-1-13.xml  
  
Tell the auld grouch  
When he's peeling:  
Gouge their eyes out.

17-1-2.xml  
  
**X cubed**Where parallels meet, the cube becomes  
A sphere in placid orbit.  
The die is an imperative that never comes to rest  
Where Y is latitude, alliteration, start of a sound  
And X is longitude, rhyme, a syllable's end,  
Let Z be the changing light from equinox to equinox,  
Vocalic play on assonance of place  
So that when I'm asked But daddy, what's the matter?  
I'll can say  
That who and you and I will meet again or maybe not,  
Not "Nothing much", the which, while strictly accurate,  
Isn't true.

17-2-3.xml  
  
Can you cope?  
Would you want to?

17-2-4.xml  
  
Flat-top flick with the bruckle  
Tortoiseshell and gel;  
Comb, comb, comb,  
A paddle in black cream  
No shore in sight

18-1-3.xml  
  
The line of a world going round its sun  
Open hoop or a coil of them  
Landline ringing out, wee diode pulsing  
On the 50s switchboard  
Of a secret bunker.

18-2-3.xml  
  
"Where lights and wine are set  
For supper by the lake" - W.H. Auden  
A chemist and an international. Nothing they don't know  
About Bordeaux, Bach and mountains you can point at with your pastry fork.  
There is no hope in heaven.

18-2-4.xml  
  
**Home**It could be in Islamabad or Rome  
Or the house we got in Switerland,  
For home, like poems of mine read out  
By people I won't know, isn't even  
Some place I remember. It's  
Wherever you bed down, alone or with me,  
Demanding 'sustainable cuddles' like a good wee  
Bureaucrat, warming your soles against my shins.  
A boat hove to, as if we could make  
A port of any storm, though one we won't,  
There'll yet be room beside me. Yours.

19-1-3.xml  
  
That whoop  
As he ran off the slope  
And the hang-glider lifted him  
Clear of the cliff  
Echoed off of me  
Bristled and thrilled.

19-2-5.xml  
  
Oh Wattie! Tango wabster wove  
And thirsty tongue to palate clove.  
The wabster wove, the preacher practised,  
A warld birrelled on its axis.  
Unravel, dehisce and decline.  
Is there a second chance? Ask Scotty.  
The keel was a shuttle on no loom.  
Slack, dehiscent foam. Knots and frames,  
Knots and frames, and nothing  
Wove its overmastering ephemera.

19-3-6.xml  
  
On the wharf,  
Unfinishable  
Bridge to nowhere  
You attend the wind.  
Some won't forget you  
Others won't forgive.

20-1-3.xml  
  
**Ding Ding**When rhyme is a loop  
And reason a circle  
When nothing at work'll  
Work out for the coop-  
er of verse in the hoop  
Of routine, in the murk of  
Loch Gloom with the snorkel  
Bunged up, don't say "bloop",  
Don't throw in the sponge at round  
Ten. See, I've found  
This horse shoe. Here, loos-  
en your glove. To the ring,  
Gaun and land a good swing,  
It's his trapdoor and noose.

20-2-3.xml  
  
**Navvy Lope**What navigator shovels with a rudder?  
Frowned McCarey, who ploughed a wake before the hull  
To lock it in the landscape.  
A furrow deep enough to sow with totty boats and churches,  
Manhattaning in March then going to spore.  
  
A railway cutting rubbles with a shudder.  
Who dat lope  
Across a skyline once upon a West?  
That interloper!  
Sitting in a barber chair still chewing his cheroot.  
The cartel delegates its rest  
To trigger and escapement.  
Lily's planning her elopement.

20-2-4.xml  
  
Until I swim in loam, until your silence

1-1-5.xml

1-2-3.xml  
  
**"And winking mary buds begin"**If, at primary school, you were made to sing "Hark, hark, the lark"  
And taught that its author was "maybe the greatest bard that ever lived"  
But haven't yet gone off the way of the words,  
Then either there was a lot of weight on "maybe",  
Or you reckoned you could dunt him off his plinth,  
Or maybe, friend, you know when to listen to the singer  
And when to the song.

1-2-4.xml  
  
**Annunciation**Om  
Said the angel  
Resistance is futile.

2-1-3.xml  
  
Off Anchorage  
A ripple on the screen  
Bloop of liquid closing owre  
A heavy solenoid

2-2-9.xml  
  
**Toad in a Thunderstorm**Some kind of bloat-fish shat and boaked itself  
Up to the eyes in nothing to boast about;  
Tremulous self-possession broached by thunder  
Tries to bolt but, rather than lollop, totters, a pantomime fart:  
Bad legs of two old men in high heels,  
An upturned boat on top.

2-2-10.xml  
  
Scraped and bowed my jigs and reels  
Bold as a batsman. Big-boned prop  
To the bar bode ill,  
Half bored, half-cut  
He bowled a bouncer.  
Out.

3-1-4.xml  
  
A plume of dust and smoke where the mortar hit  
Pulverised rock and, with luck, pelvis. Aerosol lymph  
A dash of colour to the fading feather.

3-2-8.xml  
  
Prone to gloom so happed in grammar  
Glittering coal. The crows  
Seem to regard him as their own.

3-2-9.xml  
  
Half-harbour, half-market, a port.  
That’s your poet: rattling china teacup in a storm  
Of beauty (terror that’s not out to get you  
But does). Routinely poked in the eye by it all,  
Left speechless by language he’s poached and reset,  
Sustain from the last post to whispered  
Love song at dawn.

4-1-7.xml  
  
**Video Mouth-Off**A drawstring purse of rooted dice  
Round a splashpool for something deep  
Its flukes grafted back of Adam's apple.  
Squealing tinnitus on glass  
Video wipers bent with sleet, you see  
This apparatus mouthe whatever.

4-2-5.xml  
  
**Malva**A poke of marshmallows  
More pillow than pill,  
Peely-wally not mauve,  
But then mauve is an aniline  
Dye, anil: indigo once. Now  
Synthetic, not mallow at all.

4-4-6.xml  
  
Thou shalt not covet  
Thy neighbour's muff.

5-1-10.xml  
  
She viewed him with distaste.  
He vowed he'd get her.

5-2-11.xml  
  
Among the voes in summer  
Where land is cracked in the sea  
As bonxies guard their eggs  
The voles are much too busy.  
Much too busy.

5-2-12.xml  
  
They ask us to bray, once  
In every few years,  
Either B or B flat.  
But if nobody does  
And if nobody votes...

6-1-5.xml  
  
Many've been called but  
Few've been frozen.

6-2-7.xml  
  
Fourth attempt  
Full choke  
Flint gagged on fuel  
Engine flooded  
Sun clears the dunny  
Sees us through:  
Throw forth  
Your filth  
And back it comes  
On wind or wash  
Upcycled oil  
For fish & chips.

6-2-8.xml  
  
The birds have flown, and the climate  
Crash Cassandras (business class)  
As though to ensure  
It happens. Could they not  
Just use the phone?

7-1-11.xml  
  
My old thews!  
Said the plague flea  
That had just spent a day  
Or a week crawling up  
A big blade of grass, to jump at  
A rat, which it missed,  
They're no what they were.

7-2-8.xml  
  
Power  
Has no throne,  
Its vectors - no authority.  
They get drunk and thrown away.

7-2-9.xml  
  
Throat and spittle  
Throttle. Choke  
The glottal clicks  
And stops.

8-1-9.xml  
  
Commander-in-Chief  
A newt with a knout.

8-2-8.xml  
  
He was known for his  
(Fill in the blank)  
Now he's not.

8-2-9.xml  
  
A sound that never changed or stopped:  
Would that be silence?  
Could the silence be switched off? If so  
The song could sound out, note for note.

9-1-4.xml  
  
The tomb is empty

9-2-5.xml  
  
You and your heavy  
Metal detector  
Checking the stacks for a critical trove you could get  
Literally  
Straight from this gift-horse's mouth.

9-3-6.xml  
  
Franco the Fist is a toff.  
He'd no take the spittoon for a trough. He gied me  
The castle he took from the Chancellor's  
Boy when he'd topped him and dungeoned  
The widow that wouldn’t clear off.

10-1-4.xml  
  
If doom is all your yesterday's D.I.Y.  
Today's the dempster

10-2-5.xml  
  
We drove on down  
And when I say We  
I mean well I mean  
Me and the  
Tail lights ahead in the rain.

10-3-6.xml  
  
In the corridors of power  
Doff your hat and keep the heid.

11-1-4.xml  
  
**Zoom in on Woman**I could yet  
Zoom out of this  
Dumb dive  
And batter against the glass  
Or is that  
What I'm doing

11-2-5.xml  
  
Hark, hark! Said the crow  
That cocked an ear  
And doffed a stove-pipe hat;  
What's that? A morning rush  
Where every starling second strove  
To pass. The crow flapped through them.

11-4-6.xml  
  
By the scruff! Suff-  
ering silence: scuff it raw  
And graft it to your noises,  
Lines of bubbling surf.  
Slough the little poems like yourself  
And you can snuff it  
In peace. Honking like Lazarus,  
Scurf on your laying-out suit.

12-1-3.xml  
  
People have no time for me  
Even when they're stuck for things to do  
They don't call back. No as if  
I'm trying to sell them something.  
Wife and daughter, here they are,  
A couple of friends, but far away.  
I dupe myself with this  
Toy telephone.

12-2-9.xml  
  
Electric jolt.  
Thunder choked  
On the chain of the wind  
And the park released  
Its scents, as you did.

12-3-10.xml  
  
Jogged in the park, joined up  
And jawed in the mess. Dear God  
To get me through.

13-1-8.xml  
  
Five Chilean bishops  
Appealed to the Brit justiciary  
On behalf of their dictator.  
Behold the black bulbs  
Of their ten shoon  
Peek from under cyclamen soutanes.

13-2-8.xml  
  
In line with my wife  
A hen-toed Korean  
Not twenty: licorice  
Cable of hair at her nape  
Down on her temples  
No profile. Not quite. A short  
Upper lip. Shy  
Tits on a stele from the Cyclades  
Broad and thin shoulders like wings. A low voice  
Resounding in what? How has she felt  
Among big Western blondes? Shown  
Their passport, both of them gone  
On the same plane to Asia.

13-3-9.xml  
  
I'm the man that putts the shot on your packet of porridge oats.  
Just tuck it under your chin like a fiddle, and wheech!  
It's like trying to shuck your shadow or your conscience: it stays put,  
It's you that steps away, a bit short of breath,  
A bit shocked at how hard it was or just how easy.  
So there you are in orbit, all your money spent, shopped out  
And somebody's shroffed the metal where it lay.

14-1-4.xml  
  
**A Dacha near Leningrad**A shaft of stone  
With a liquid lens  
Sorceress  
What do you see  
In the well of the stone  
In the stone of the well?  
Wild swans.  
A day on the dacha  
Quartered together  
Under the heat.  
Circle the horizon. Look!  
Exclamatory puffs of smoke  
For pines and birches.  
A wooden trap in the smoky trees.  
Lift the stone, open the door:  
Cold bright darkness facing up  
Through the flattening heat.  
In the well of the woods  
In the woods of the well  
Mister seer, what do you see?  
A quiet ward of rheumy-eyed  
Expectorating old men watching  
The television's lovely face.  
A low serai on December dunes.  
Go to the glass meniscus, see  
A room with a lamp and a stove and a cat  
And the four of us in company  
In the plumb of the snows  
In the vertical winter.

14-2-5.xml  
  
Your omnivore  
Has scoffed the lot.  
Wherever you rove  
It's over.

14-4-6.xml  
  
A tough husk to crack  
Between the tongue and teeth  
The rights and rocks  
Intention, sense and sound  
Initial, vowel, end.  
Rough, and done before you know it  
Caught before it's felt  
But lose your touch  
And lose your say in things :  
You dae wht yr tellt.

15-1-7.xml  
  
Youth is wasted on the young  
Age is wasted on the living  
Jokes are wasted on the dead  
Unless they're drunk. And even then

15-2-15.xml  
  
The Yore Flood  
That guggly yawn.  
I went down  
And came up through the bilges  
A lungfish  
Through somebody's septum.

16-3-16.xml  
  
**No Spitting**But who'd want to grog on the bus?  
The problem was the pee:  
Delete it, or amend to aitch.

17-1-3.xml  
  
**At the Lisboa**Les jeux sont faits. Les jeux  
Sont faits. Arretez tout.  
Coop the Portingale, cut the pontoon.  
The banyan hasn't a croup to thrash  
The tarnished estuary coughs up its cash  
At the handover  
From typhoon to China  
Macao, Star of the Sea,  
Descends to heaven.

17-2-5.xml  
  
**Madeleine**Ah, garlic, when she kissed  
You came between us! Cove  
And sparkle of her tongue. Then  
Those exquisitely fine paper pyjamas,  
Callused heel; the oily,  
Ivory-warm clove of her body.

17-3-6.xml  
  
A burst of noise, a biodegradable  
Cough wants immortality, gets  
Prosthetic perpetuity,  
Metals that out-bide our time.

18-1-4.xml  
  
For Hume the bell tolls ding a  
Ling a ling but David  
Doesn’t take the call.

18-2-5.xml  
  
Hove to in a storm at sea  
Hid behind our shadow  
Bored and frightened.

18-3-6.xml  
  
A hauf and a hauf-  
Pint. A hauf and a  
Hauf-pint. A hauf  
And a hauf-pint. Hauf  
Time. My shout.  
Just a wee hauf, eh?  
And a hauf pint.

19-1-4.xml  
  
Ten years ago to the night, we came  
On a one-way ticket and a two-year contract,  
With a little girl, a little cash and a Christmas crib.  
Does the woman through the wall from that  
First, furnished flat still cry all night?  
Does the transvestite who beat his dog  
Have regular fistfights with the neighbour?  
Will his pal still call the police? My embourgeoisement  
Complete, I've no nostalgia for the womb,  
But I think it's time we left the incubator.

19-2-8.xml  
  
Worn down by routine or just worn  
A torc or trinket necklace -   
Not that routine has a neck  
Or any form we don't  
Attribute or endow.

19-2-9.xml  
  
This won't do. It just  
Won't do.

20-1-4.xml  
  
**Loom**A red-throated diver, the jut of its jaw.  
I'm weaving the waters in this old tub.  
The shafts rise on the rowlocks  
As I pull the oars to my bollocks.  
Land ahoy, like a whiff of smoked egg plant.  
Saint Brendan! With an heirloom like this,  
Do you reckon it's landfall tonight?

20-2-6.xml  
  
'Use the loaf': would that be  
loaf of breid, as in, yr heid?  
I'd sooner loaf on deck,  
A pantoum pasha, waiving all  
But usufruct, or its  
Anticipation.

20-2-7.xml  
  
Nothing loath  
An orchid in a stone  
She saw the look  
And gathered up, with that  
Tinge of green bamboo keeps,  
A shift of - wouldn't it just be? -   
Green silk. A competition:  
Impress me with a gift.  
Some brought her gold, you know,  
You name it she would loathe.  
One said for you I'll kill  
My son. Well that did it.  
She took him on (he had no son)  
And how - the rain like those  
Bead curtains for a time - they  
Wrestled. Ultrasound.  
Home, her mouth as if  
Flattened against glass.  
And he's afraid. She  
Sits across from him.  
Sets a knife on the board.

1-1-9.xml  
  
Oust a counterforce and find  
Your old self out of kilter.

1-2-6.xml  
  
**The Boys in the Band**An oaf with an ax  
A drone on bass  
And a grunt with a drumkit  
Doing deals with suits.

1-2-7.xml  
  
Is music  
And the maths behind it  
Rhetoric?  
A technical oath?

2-1-4.xml  
  
Nobody heard the big boom. By the time  
Things had cooled down enough for a life  
For the bloom of a thousand policemen, mechanics  
Was kind of old hat (though it worked)  
Dust in the broom. Who'd have thought  
A bomb could create its own target  
Then miss it?

2-2-11.xml  
  
**In the Gods**What bodes it  
That he who  
Bows the fiddle, blows the flute and thumps  
The boles of beech with one of those  
Fossil hominid femurs fir for hunting  
Boars in winklepicker brogues should  
Save his breath for cooling bowls of  
Brose? He bores us.  
No one follows these,  
The breadcrumb bourns of his bewilderment.

2-2-12.xml  
  
Dry boaks and heaves of boasts that eat their words.  
He bolts his breakfast. Somebody says  
Alpha blokes avoiding income tax,  
Patrol boats out to get mephitic dinghies.  
Amazing how a day in the water bloats them.

3-1-5.xml  
  
Three tanned and silver samurai  
With their cutlery in golf bags  
Vintage Harley saddle on the horse  
We were off to the war.  
Me with just a big lance  
Looking to get maimed or amputated.  
At his bus stop the sound technician left us  
We were joined by one of my students  
No backing out now, what though  
Not only had I nothing to prove  
But there WAS nothing to prove  
Proof being a factor of tautology  
So more or less redundant. Banzai.

3-2-10.xml  
  
**For M.C.**The sound that it pored over probed this body  
Tension  
The signal it implied explored that self  
Intention  
Plasma poured across the universe  
No blame  
The cathode star implied another verse  
A poled environment  
The words explode implode. Presolar diamond. Innocent.

3-2-11.xml  
  
**Brexit Pursued by a Blair**Pose as in set down in verse  
The pros and amateur cons of referenda  
The cons have it  
Footnote prose is boring  
Poems put the fake in fact  
The enquiry probes so gently that it tickles  
Blair is back  
King of the fucking zombies  
One mustn't call them proles  
Or give them benefit cuts  
Their pores are clogged - that happens  
They scratch their back on telegraph poles  
When one of them pours a drink, decline  
Or look them in the eye  
If they have one  
Tell them about suffrage  
Talk to them about the polls.

4-1-8.xml  
  
That a mote in the eye retain its power and beauty  
Is good. That even those who lose their fight and flight  
Should do time stitching tired  
Metaphors is fair enough.

4-2-8.xml  
  
Less and more than  
A hinge on hereinafter,  
The stricken moan.  
Come on, you graceless heirs,  
Dig our your mask and mourn.

4-2-9.xml  
  
"Beis not ourstudyus to spy a moyt in mine e  
That in your awin a ferry boyt can nocht se."  
- Gavin Douglas  
You were, at most, a mote in my refulgence  
Afloat on the briny moat around my eye  
Where crocodiles moped and snapped at the importunate  
Subtropical moult.

5-1-11.xml  
  
A manager's views are his vision. Time-  
Bound objectives are his vows.

5-2-16.xml  
  
**In Vogue**It's not my style  
But then what is

6-1-17.xml  
  
See biology fluke a pristine planet  
As a whaler chains leviathan's tail  
And trematodes colonize your liver.

7-2-10.xml  
  
**The Day Job**You loathed and tholed it  
Did it. Done.

7-3-1.xml  
  
**vosk vechnosti taet**To see deep-frozen frisbee thaw  
And melt like mozzarella  
Thraw an asteroid discus round the sun.

8-4-2.xml  
  
The nub of the issue,  
I mean the take-home message  
Having binned its phonetic skin  
The semantic banana  
And reducing the fruit  
To its political sense

9-1-7.xml  
  
Well to tell you the truth  
To gear every sprocketless tooth to the differential

9-2-7.xml  
  
By my troth  
I mean it  
By the scruff, you fuckers,  
Not the throat.

9-2-8.xml  
  
The vowels set the tone  
But his voice was done.  
Even the wear and tear  
Was worn and torn.

10-1-6.xml  
  
**Grayfriar**There's nuthin so dowf  
As a wowf in a houf  
Except mibbe a gowfer in bowfarts.

10-2-8.xml  
  
Wealth creation, guarded  
By monotony and violence:  
The drone.

10-2-9.xml  
  
Don't  
I mean aw no  
Don't tell me  
Obstupefact!  
Obstupefuckwit!  
Who doped the D in Dolt? Who is  
The double-dote to stupor?

11-1-5.xml  
  
**On Seein Penis Envoi on a contents page...**Go littel prick, lyke tae a cordliss moose,  
lee aff the gentle furrow  
amid the winter bracken o the mons,  
an snoove in every burrow  
you kin squeeze or rattle roon in.  
Mak mair contax  
thn a public libury copy say of  
Michael Jackson: the buke o the  
film o the tune, or Cawse  
ma Politan, or Jings, or Peepil's Fren.  
Jist mind y pick up less in the way o  
viral anecdotage  
on the wey. Dust jaicket, eh?  
An whin yir back,  
forwandirt and forjaisket  
wi makin the maukin ding,  
an whin ma liver's back fae Burgundy,  
my hert fi the Hielans, ma lungs  
fae the laundry, and my brains,  
my squasshy walnut smergh fi its  
pickle-jaur in the oaffice,  
we'll mibbe can get thegither  
an dae organic barbershop quintets  
under ur windy. Mibbe she'll gie us  
undeclared employment the odd dinnertime,  
munelight when the weanzr it school  
and the wee yin asleep in iz pram.

11-2-7.xml  
  
Sloth, that did for my dad, is the sin against  
Whatever's advertised as worth it. Take it  
If you can distil and sell it on  
Go up to the bar and get yourself a snifter  
Add two drops of water, ferry it  
Back to your table, set it down and watch.